

## Wandering vs. Monumental Textual Effects in “Wandering Rocks”

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Following “Aeolus”—the episode beginning to break away from the “initial style” and from “the novelistic form of [*Ulysses*] first half” (Lawrence 27)—“Wandering Rocks” distinctly reverberates with Joyce’s attempt to experiment and dismantle the novelistic form. Though less formalistically eye-catching than the boldface headlines in “Aeolus,” “Wandering Rocks” nonetheless features segments and vignettes just as stylistically disparate and discontinuous as the boldface headlines in “Aeolus.” There are altogether 19 sections in “Wandering Rocks,” a number close enough to be self-reflexively approximating the 18 episodes of *Ulysses*. With such “[c]lose similarity” (Senn, “Weaving” 48), “Wandering Rocks” marks itself a natural candidate for evincing innate stylistic/textual reflection.

### I. The Centripetal Style

Centering on Father Conmee, section 1 of “Wandering Rocks” decidedly sets

the key note of politico-stylistic fixity for this episode. The first sentence marking section 1's opening is "The superior, the very reverend John Conmee S.J. reset his smooth watch in his interior pocket as he came down the presbytery steps" (10.1-2). The three key words, "superior," "reset," and "interior," all share the primary and originating quality, demarcating the literally superior status of Fr. Conmee. Such superiority then gets substantiated by the ease he takes in walking. While deciding that it was "Just nice time to walk to Artene" (10.3), Conmee runs across "A onelegged sailor" who "jerked short before the convent of the sisters of charity" (10.8-9) "by lazy jerks of his crutches" (10.7-8). The lack of ease, or jerkiness, of the sailor poses a sharp contrast to Conmee's ease in walking. Intrusive as it is, the sailor's begging poses little disruption to the integrity of Conmee's "interior pocket": he "blessed him" only, holding the "one silver crown" (10.11) in his purse. Nor does it disturb his peace of mind: "He thought, but not for long, of soldiers and sailors, whose legs had been shot off by cannonballs" (10.13). Such is the indication of Conmee's rigid determination not to let anything interfere with his "flinty" worldview (Haag 117). This narrative or textual specificity also evinces the scenario where "contradictions . . . threaten to break through" the "smooth" surface of Conmee's vision of reality, he typically "moves to repress them" (Williams 154).

Conmee's superiority also gets transcribed in his confidence or self-knowledge. In the example above, Conmee blessed the sailor only, for "he knew" his purse held the one silver crown which he would not spare. The next time "he knew" something as sure as his one silver crown is when he decided to smile broadly to Mrs. Sheehy: "And smiled yet again, in going. He had cleaned his teeth, he knew, with arecanut paste" (10.32). Such confident smile is yet again seen when he gave the letter to father provincial to Master Brunny Lynam, whose name he feels "a very nice name to have" (10.44-45), to post it: "He smiled and nodded and smiled and walked" (10.54). As in his knowing conversation with the wife of Mr. David Sheehy M. P., his giving the letter to a Belvedere schoolboy with pleasure shows his affinity to the "master" ruling class, which he "knew" of. It is probably no accident that he runs into both at Mountjoy square, the name sounding a note of

upward mobility, not to mention it being a fashionable area in 1904 (see Gifford 260).<sup>1)</sup>

The smoothness with which Conmee views reality, according to Trevor Williams, "throws a kind of opacity over the first section," which "suggests that Conmee is on the other side of the glass but not even looking in" (155). One example is Mrs. M'Guinness whom he saw en route. In his eyes, she is "stately, silverhaired" (10.62) who has "A fine carriage . . . Like Mary, queen of Scots, something" (10.65). However, such a noble description is at variance with the squalid fact of her being a pawnbroker. Typical of Conmee, he does not think for long: "And to think that she was a pawnbroker! Well, now! Such a . . . what should he say? . . . such a queenly mien" (10.65-67, Joyce's ellipses). The mark of ellipses literally encapsulates Conmee's suppression of the distasteful reality which he chooses to view as nothing but "idyllic" (10.104). Besides this one example, Williams points out subsequent examples in which "Conmee appears to control the world he contemplates effortlessly and mechanically" (155)—"the two unlabouring men" whom he saw lounge against Daniel Bergin's pub window are actually unemployed, but "Conmee defused and absorbed into his benign worldview" (Williams 155) such unpleasantness; then another suppression, just as textually overt as the ellipses in the above, is Conmee's passing St Joseph's Asylum for Aged and Virtuous Females—"the text, suppressing the word 'asylum' on Conmee's behalf, yields only the phrase 'For aged and virtuous females' (10.80)—as if protecting him from knowledge of extreme human passion" (Williams 158). Thus the above examples of elliptical suppression of the distasteful fact of pawnbrokage, the devising euphemism for the unemployed men, and omission of the unbearable word of "asylum" all demonstrate an "urge" in this overtly Conmee-centered section to "fix meaning" (Williams 158) which Williams famously coins as "the Conmee style," or "Conmeeism" (155).

In addition to generating a veil of "benign" opacity over the reality, the

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1) Also Lord Mountjoy was one of the staunch opponents to the "succumbing to the primitive native culture in Ireland" (see Gibbons, "Race" 97).

Conmee style, or rather, the meaning-fixing style, is marked by abundant reference to intentionality as characterizing Husserlian transcendental phenomenology. “Husserl’s programme of intentionality” prescribes “the inescapable bonds between human consciousness and the phenomenality of the world” (Steiner 4). Meaning, for Husserl, “is always an intentional act, be it the act of the author in naming a referent, or the act of the reader in duplicating the author’s sense through the medium of an intentional object (which here would be the verbal sign, or text)” (Magliola 98). “In his *Ideen*, Husserl designates that transcendental subjectivity (which transcends empirical egos) ‘constitutes’ intentionality, and intentionality divides into two structures which are distinct yet unified: the noetic (or intending act) and the noematic (or intended elements)” (Magliola 105). Phenomenological epistemology is hence characterized by the reciprocal and unified implication of subject and object, self and the world, or the noesis, the meaning-embodying process itself. Section 1, likewise, is replete with Conmee’s act of saluting and his being reciprocally saluted by other people, the latter including William Gallagher, two unlaboring men, a constable, and the conductor. The richness as can be seen in these descriptions in the subjective intentionality as innate in transcendental phenomenology prescribes the fullness in meaning itself. Thus the Conmee style enforces a controlling unity in tune with the religious hegemony which “Conmee the great patriarch” (Williams 156) represents and imposes on the Irish society. And indeed section 1 of “Wandering Rocks” delimits such centripetal and logocentric style.

## II. The Centrifugal Style

Cohesive and dominating as it is, the Conmee style must still entertain disruption by one of the intrusions which will characterize the volatile, discontinuous style of the rest of “Wandering Rocks.” After describing Conmee’s smiling, nodding, and again smiling after he gave the letter to one Belvedere boy

to post, the narrative is all of a sudden interrupted by a description—totally irrelevant to Fr. Conmee’s peaceful peregrination—of Mr. Denis J. Maginni’s who also “walking with grave deportment most respectfully took the curbstone” (10.58-59). Clive Hart explains that the justification for this jump-cut lies in that both Conmee’s walk and Maginni’s promenade point to the “self-advertising, self-ingratiating aspect of their apparently disparate characters” (203), thus conceding to the presence of “the total control of Joyce’s schematic imagination” (193).<sup>2</sup> Hart’s justification builds itself upon the “art” of “Wandering Rocks”—i. e. “mechanics” (Gifford 260). While Hart’s explanation may be pertinent in justifying the correlation between Conmee’s section and the intrusion of Maginni, the latter nonetheless cuts short the main narrative when Fr. Conmee’s smile is at its most snug.

Abrupt intrusions like Maginni’s segment start to short circuit the succeeding narratives with more frequency, begging the concern with flimsy causality desperately. Abrupt as they are, some intrusions can, at best, be explained as simultaneous happenings concurrent with the action as described in the present section. A straightforward example is “a generous white arm . . . flung forth a coin” (10.222-23), this understandably to concur with Corny Kelleher’s spitting hayjuice, and indeed, the text juxtaposes these two by the conjunction “while” (10.222). Less straightforward but understandably concurrent ones constitute the majority of the intrusions—to list, the description of Fr. Conmee’s “thinsocked ankles tickled by stubble” (10.264-65) intruding the kitchen conversation of the Dedalus sisters; then section 4 ends with the concurrent action of “a crumpled throwaway” riding down the Liffey (10.295); five sandwichmen threading the city to concur with Miss Dunne’s typing (sec. 5); Lynch’s girlfriend whom Fr. Conmee saw pass by in section 1 now reappears in section 8 similarly detaching a twig from her skirt, this

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2) Bonnie Kime Scott gives a “minoritarian” reading of this intrusion: she brings our attention to the Oscar Wilde resemblance in the clothing of Maginni; therefore, the mention of Maginni “insinuates the gay community upon the rock of the church and the course of empire” (143).

to concur with J.J. O'Molloy and Ned Lambert's conversation about the historical site of Mary's abbey; both times in section 9, Dignam coming out of the butcher's to concur with Lenehan and M'Coy's crossing a bridge (10.534-35) and a card saying "Unfinished Apartments," which already showed up in section 3, now reappears on the scene of 7 Eccles street, simultaneously with though away from the present site of "Merchant's arch" (10.520) where Lenehan and M'Coy converse about the annual dinner; in section 10 while Bloom is reading from the bookcart, Mr. Maginni's being observed by many people takes place simultaneously (10.599-600) and in the same section, an elderly female's leaving the courts building happens at the same time with Bloom's reading *Sweets of Sin* which he decides to get for Molly; though taking up only one line of description, Mr. Kernan's walking along James's street intrudes but understandably concurs with Dilly and Mr. Dedalus's conversation (10.673) in section 11 and while almost finishing his meeting with his daughter, Mr. Dedalus walked on, when "the "Viceregal cavalcade passed, greeted by obsequious policemen, out of the Parkgate" (10.709-10); section 12 also has multiple concurrences-intrusions—Mr. Kernan's stream of consciousness is thrice interrupted by Fr. Cowley and Mr. Dedalus's greeting (10.740-41), the passage of the throwaway saying "Elijah is coming" (10.752-54), and Denis Breen's moving toward a solicitor's office (10.778-80); the passing of Farrell (10.919-20) and reverend Hugh C. Love (10.928-31) concurs with Ben Dollard, Fr. Cowley, and Mr. Dedalus's conversation; Miss Kennedy's and Miss Douce's heads' appearing in the Ormond hotel, Nannetti's descending the steps of the city hall, and Boylan's waylaying Bob Doran concur with Martin Cunningham and Mr. Power's conversation about raising money (10.962-63; 970-71; 984-85); the onelegged sailor's growling concurs with Mulligan and Haines' tea (10.1063-64) and finally the passage of the same throwaway as seen in section 4 and 12 now reappears to concur with their conversation (10.1096-99).

Although the above long list of interruptions can be explained as actions concurrently taking place elsewhere to the present action, a sharp sense of discontinuity and rupture in the narrative line is nonetheless formed, defying the

linear logic as inherent in the realistic narratology. Worse still, concurrences at best, these many intrusive passages actually fail to form meaningful correlation with the main narrative, which Vincent Sherry terms as sheer “nonfunctional” or “gratuitous” elements resisting satisfactory rationalization or causality (31). Such logic-defying gratuity signals that “the principles of cross-cutting become more artificial and abstract” (Hegglund 180). Teeming with blatantly intrusive passages, “Wandering Rocks” galvanizes the logic-defying, fluid stylistics, or, to borrow the episode’s own metaphor, “wandering” style.

### III. The Wandering Textual Effect

While the above-listed examples seemingly serve the (non)function of pure intrusion and thus spell out narrative discontinuity, some of them bespeak worse problematics as far as their narrative style and the effects thus generated are concerned. First of these problematics is when reappearing, some of these intrusive passages strangely keep to their original form as they first appear, as if the first-time mention did not exist at all. The description “a generous white arm from a window in Eccles street flung forth a coin” (10.222-23) is juxtaposed the first time with Corny Kelleher’s spitting hayjuice; the second time the same passage reappears only one section away in section 3; however, it keeps roughly the same phrasing of an indefinite article: “A plump bare generous arm shone, was seen, held forth from a white petticoatbodice and taut shiftstraps. A woman’s hand flung forth a coin over the area railings” (10.251-54). Just one sentence earlier, the passage “A card *Unfurnished Apartments* slipped from the sash and fell” (10.250-51) first appears in the same section 3, but when this reappears much later in section 9 as a form of pure intrusion, the phrasing remains recognizably the same, still with an indefinite article: “A card *Unfurnished Apartments* reappeared on the windowsash of number 7 Eccles street” (10.542-43). Likewise, “A skiff, a crumpled throwaway, Elijah is coming, rode down the Liffey” (10.294-95), which first appears in section

4, when reappearing in section 12, assumes recognizable similar indefinite phraseology: “sailing westward, sailed by a skiff, a crumpled throwaway, rocked on the ferrywash, Elijah is coming” (10.753-54). Another example is the onelegged sailor, who when first appearing intrudes Fr. Conmee’s leisurely walk: “A onelegged sailor, swinging himself onward by lazy jerks of his crutches, growled some notes” (10.7-8). Section 3 begins with the same sailor, but is introduced again as an indefinite one: “A onelegged sailor crutched himself round MacConnell’s corner . . . and jerked himself up Eccles street” (10.298-99). What these above examples share in common is “a strange failing in the ‘narrative memory’” because the narrative is unable “to progress from the indefinite to the definite article” (Lawrence 30). As a result of such narrative amnesia, the text unfixes itself from a binding unity which sustains a quasi-realistic appearance merely on the surface.

Another volatile example partaking of the unfixing strength of the above kind is the description of Mr. Denis Maginni who when appearing three times—as an intrusion in sections 1 and 10 and a summary in section 19—is always accompanied with the fixed, formulaic label “professor of dancing & c” (10.56; 600; 1239). Superficially fixing as it is, this formula, however, forms a kind of “linguistic label” which when stuck to the characters “exhausted the potential of the characters, as if Thom’s Dublin Directory were equated with the real life of Dublin” (Lawrence 31). When reappearing, expressions like “professor of dancing & c” form “cross-reference-like” signals as one can find in a textbook. Karen Lawrence reminds us that such is a process of inventory one already finds in “Aeolus,” when both cases highlight “the artifice of writing” (31).

The artifice of writing which started to become prominent in “Aeolus” can be seen to anticipate the post-structuralist propensity for the “writerly text” which gives free rein to the “infinity of languages” (Barthes 5), thereby inviting the reader’s active production—rather than passive consumption—of the work. Therefore, it is of suspicious note that the descriptions for two diverse events in two separate sections can much resemble each other in shape. The first is the description of the movement of Miss Dunne’s getting ready to type: “The disk shot



down the groove, wobbled a while, ceased and ogled them: six" (10.373-74). The second is Tom Rochford's taking the top disk from the pile, thus announcing to the music hall audience which act is on stage: "He slid it into the left slot for them. It shot down the groove, wobbled a while, ceased, ogling them: six"; "He slid in a disk for himself: and watched it shoot, wobble, ogle, stop: four" (10.468-69; 482-83). The similar phrasing refers to two actually different things, creating a sense of *déjà vu* which is purely a formalistic-textual recollection and experience as very distinct from an experience of an external reality. This sense of *déjà vu* also constitutes the cross-referentiality similar to the effect which we already saw the formulaic description of Maginni generate, which is no less than a textually self-reflexive affair.

To cap, the discontinuous intrusive passages, the persistent indefinite articles, the formulaic labeling of the characters, and then the formalistically echoing style all constitute a centrifugal force in contradistinction to the centripetal meaning-fixing stability which the *Commeist* style of section 1 seeks to produce. They form the textual "wandering rocks" impeding the logical flow and mimetic impulse of the plot. "Wandering Rocks" is also interesting in that its "wandering," multiply-perspectival narrative seems to be capably engineered only by a machine-like, i.e. camera-like eye. One easily takes one's cue from the fact that Joyce's own designation of "art" for this chapter is "mechanics" (Gifford 260). Machine-like technicality is indeed of much concern of the narrative. Bloom's relativity-conscious perspective on life—"parallax" (8.110)—is stylistically practiced here in "Wandering Rocks." The open and indeterminate forms and pluralistic techniques particularly prominent in "Wandering Rock," indeed, involve parallax, "the stereoscopic vision" (Watson 55), which is an optic device juxtaposing two pictures of an object from different points of view and merging these into one three-dimensional image.

Of the previously-listed intrusions, many are, indeed, parallaxic in purpose and nature, cutting in the narrative with "a plurality of recurrences that are already slightly different repetitions" (Huang 594). For instance, in section 2, while the

main narrative describes Corny Kelleher looks idly out from the doorway of the undertaker's, Fr. Conmee is mentioned to be getting on the tram in the same breath (10.213-14), this providing a parallaxic—same-and-different—perspective of the action occurring in section 1: “Father Conmee passed H. J. O’Neill’s funeral establishment where Corny Kelleher totted figures in the daybook while he chewed a blade of hay” (10.96-97). Likewise, the montage of “Father Conmee walked through Clongowes fields, his thinsocked ankles tickled by stubble” (10.264-65) onto the Dedalus’s daughters’ conversation in section 4 can be understood as a display of two co-existing but totally diverse perspectives, separated in space by three sections. Another passage from section 1—“a young woman abruptly bent and with slow care detached from her light skirt a clinging twig” (10.201-02)—now cuts into the section as remote as section 8 as a pure intrusion in Ned Lambert and J. J. O’Molloy’s conversation: “The young woman with slow care detached from her light skirt a clinging twig” (10.440-41). Mr. Denis J Maginni, professor of dancing & c. is seen again simultaneously with Bloom’s browsing from the bookcart (10.600). Then, the onelegged sailor who cuts into Fr. Conmee’s perambulation is seen again in section 16, still growling “England expects. . .” (10.1063-64), cutting into Mulligan and Haines’s tea. Juxtaposed in a totally irrelevant context, the former passages, though mostly sharing almost the exact phrasing with the latter reappearances, now take on a not-only-the-same-but-also-different outlook from the original context, presenting a parallaxic perspective in their new environs. These passages originally all from section 1 show quite clearly that when they are intercalated in later and increasingly irrelevant new contexts, their being there is to simultaneously foreground their sameness as *and* difference from the new contexts in which they are now put.

In addition to the foregoing five examples from section 1, more similarly rupture-inducing intrusions throughout the 19 sections in “Wandering Rocks” are composed of passages recycled from previous sections. A prominent recycled image is the crumpled throwaway of Elijah coming. It first intrudes in section 4 and then reappears in sections 12 and then 16. Likewise, “A card *Unfinished Apartments*”

first appears in section 3 and then resurfaces as an intrusion in section 9; Dignam’s coming out of a butcher in the same section is to reappear later in section 18; Mr. Kernan’s walking along the street which interrupts the main action of Dilly’s and Mr. Dedalus’s conversation in section 11 is to be followed by his reappearance one section later; Father Cowley and Mr. Dedalus’s greeting each other intrudes section 12 and reappears in section 14; Farrell’s passage intruding Ben Dollard, Father Cowley, and Mr. Dedalus’s conversation in section 14 reappears in section 17. Given the pervasive occurrences of these “*déjà vu*” passages in the episode, Fritz Senn famously claims that “All of ‘Wandering Rocks’ is parallettic” (“Charting” 72).

#### IV. The Monumental Textual Effect

One observes that whereas these intercalations often disturbingly disrupt or even discontinue the straightforward flow of the narrative, though providing an optically relative or the Bloomian parallettic alternative to the purportedly centripetal narrative within each section, they paradoxically reformulate—hence re-fix or perhaps even fixate on—recognizable conglomerates of meaning precisely on the strength of the same sense of *déjà vu* which has been operative in the aforementioned cross-referential passages. In other words, one can argue that while overtly diffusing the one single centralizing perspective into 19 and more (on account of intrusions) local and fragmented ones, the narrative method of “Wandering Rocks” in the meantime reinscribes Benedict Anderson’s spatially and geographically constructed “deep, horizontal” nationalistic imagination (6) or a “territorial, spatial imperative” which bears out modern nationalism’s “inviolability of territory” (Duffy 56, 55). The frequent repetitions of almost exact phrases and descriptions—such as Father Connemee’s “thinsocked ankles were tickled by stubble” (10.185; 265); “The young woman with slow care detached from her light skirt a clinging twig” (10.201-02; 440-41); “Maginni, professor of dancing & c.” (10.600)

—are by nature just as formulaic in effect as the meaning-fixing stylistic impulse abounding in Conmee’s section 1. Just as Stephen Dedalus’s stream of consciousness of the whereabouts of his “pawned schoolprizes” (10.840) triggers his reflection on the dispossession as well as the déjà vu of his author- and owner-ship of his writings—“Thumbed pages: read and read. Who has passed here before me?” (10.845-46), so these reappearing fragments have been read (for the first time, when first appearing in their diverse sections) and re-read (for the second time registered and owned by the readers’ memory though now in their new irrelevant contexts). Thus, the readers’ memory faculty is being initiated, creating in their mind, as it were, floating human reminders and statues of these characters who have “passed here before me,” who otherwise may have been beyond recognition due to the ever shifting focus of the chapter. That is, when encountering these déjà vu passages, readers will have been transferred onto themselves Stephen’s feeling of simultaneous dispossession and possession in his reflection of “Who has passed here before me?” as if they themselves have been walking in the labyrinth of modern Dublin in proxy of the characters in “Wandering Rocks.” These passages thereby formulate themselves into context-volatile—while memorable—blocks and fragments, literally floating (as does the enigmatic crumpled throwaway down the Liffey) and circulating among the textual labyrinth and wandering rocks of this episode, signaling the route which the readers, with the characters, have been to. That is to say, these non-linear reappearances ironically form and actually reformulate themselves into recognizable meaning-converging units, or even verbal monuments, precisely on the merit of the sense of déjà vu in the midst of the verbal “labyrinth” which is the “technique” of “Wandering Rocks” (Gifford 260). Not unlike the meaning-fixing movement and observation of Father Conmee as well as the centripetal attention the viceregal cavalcade draws from onlookers in Dublin, these textual repetitions generate an effect of “fixity that monuments confer upon memory” (Gibbons, “Identity” 371) by means of “their imposing presence, and their control of public space” (Gibbons, “Identity” 369) in the midst of a floating crowd, thereby strategically generating a “city-wide” or even “country-wide” “sense of

community” (Deane 44).

Enda Duffy’s insightful essay designates that “the strategies used to represent the cityscape in *Ulysses* bear similarities to the representational impetus of nationalism itself” (54), namely, “the idea that the community corresponds to the given territory, and that it is this land that gives the subject citizenship” (55). The “love of detail” and the “encyclopedic” quality for which *Ulysses* is much known paradoxically highlight Joyce’s disclaimer of Dublin’s, or for that matter, Ireland’s “placedness” in the novel. Duffy has reminded us that “the blind columned porch of the Bank of Ireland” (10.343) which two “carfuls” of “paleface” tourists gaze on suggests that “The bank of Ireland . . . until 1800 the seat of Ireland’s own parliament, is windowless: among Dubliners it is still known colloquially as ‘the blind bank.’ As a taunting monument to a disillusioned nationalism, it was also ‘blind,’ that is, disabled” (52).

*Ulysses*, indeed, carries the mention of monuments which are and are not there in Dublin, such as the “Foundation stone for Parnell” (6.320) which never gets built; “the chief’s grave” (6.919) which is rumored to be “filled with stones” for “he is not in that grave at all” (6.923); the “Haunting face” (8.502) of John Howard Parnell who is the “Great man’s brother” (8.509), reminding Dubliners of the great man himself; the grave site of Robert Emmet the whereabouts of which are unknown (9.978, also see Gifford 124; the same piece of conjecture occurs again in section 12 of “Wandering Rocks” where Mr. Kernan speculates on the remains of Emmet: “Is he buried in saint Michan’s? Or no. . .” 10.769); and the statue of Thomas Moore which Bloom notes is over a urinal (8.414-15). “Thus this city boasts a monument that draws attention to its absence, a grave that may not be a grave, and a living ghost, all to commemorate (while denying commemoration to) a failed attempt at forming a community under a parliamentary leader” (Duffy 50). Earlier in “Nestor,” Stephen was shown to foreshadow this monumentalizing failure when he coined the reference to “a disappointed bridge” (2.39).

“Wandering Rocks” can be argued to partake of this outcry against monumentalization in that this episode features bodily and physical fragmentation.

From Father Conmee's perspective, the woman sitting next to the gentleman whom he observes on the tram is reduced to "A tiny yawn" (10.125). Molly's benevolent act of giving the onelegged sailor a coin becomes merely "A generous white arm" or "A plump bare generous arm" (10.222; 251). And finally, "Wandering Rocks" literally ends with a fragment—that is, Almidano Artifoni's "sturdy trousers" which comically "salute" the viceregal cavalcade. These aside, "Wandering Rocks" also features "deceitful or absentminded" gestures, "many of them erroneous or subject to misreading" (Scott 142). These refer to, for example, Mr. Thomas Kernan's "vain gesture" (viz. "Mr Thomas Kernan beyond the river greeted him [the viceroy] vainly from afar" 10.1183-84) and "nongesture" of Simon Dedalus's lowered hat which Bernard Benstock (165) explains "as a gesture to hide his fly, not yet closed after leaving a urinal," rather than a proper salute to the cavalcade (see Scott 144). As a result, the overall impression which the readers get from "Wandering Rocks" can be summarized by Michael Tratner's remark that "Society is and always has been a world of 'wandering rocks,' of chaotic tides, and all efforts to claim that it can be a unified movement are illusory and result only in temporary and violently destructive distortions" (186). Trevor Williams' Marxist reading explains this fragmentation as "endemic within an alienated society, the sense not simply that the product of one's labor is alienated but that one's body belongs elsewhere" (156). This "elsewhere" or disclaimer of one's holistic body corresponds to the "disappearance" of Dublin in its colonial predicament—i.e. "a city as heterotopia," "Dublin as a colonial capital was an 'other place' in relation to the imperial metropolis"—as Joyce, according to Enda Duffy, characterizes his city of origin in *Ulysses* (51).

## V. Dialectical Interplay of Conflicting Textual Forces

Given the failed or absent monumentalization which Joyce observes to be endemic in Ireland's colonial predicament, that a virtual re-monumentalization has

taken place on account of the inadvertent textual re-energizing force in “Wandering Rocks” beckons serious irony. Such can be recast by Daniel P. Gunn’s most helpful analysis: “the repeated sentences in Wandering Rocks” impart in the “verbal units” “almost material weight” and carry “an almost incantatory power” (38). Taking cue from one sentence on which Nabokov has dwelled unusual attention in his lecture on *Ulysses* [i.e. “The young woman with slow care detached from her light skirt a clinging twig 10.440-41 as cited above, see Nabokov 331], Gunn explains that such a sentence “has reasserted itself obsessively, that has refused to go away” because “The nearly exact repetition of the verbal structure, its radical separation from the context, its painfully crafted air: all of these aspects mark the sentence as a piece of text, something we have already read—and we are unusually conscious of its migration from one part of the episode to another” (38). Such interest in its own “material reality” (Gunn 38) in the text of “Wandering Rocks” indeed “has reasserted itself obsessively,” refusing “to go away,” literally materializing an effect much like the re-monumentalization mentioned above, because Joyce’s art carrying “material weight” is akin to “the Rabelaisian word” which gets piled up “like rocks, as child might, on a beach” (Gunn 38).

Thus, in “Wandering Rocks” one witnesses a disturbing interplay and intercalation of a “wandering” style and a reinstated, fixing and “monumental” style, the conflict of both of which enacts the textual politics of this episode. What Seamus Deane analyzes as Joyce’s move of at once disfiguring and configuring Dublin as a colonial metropolis is very fitting:

Joyce wanted to dismantle its [Dublin’s] provincialism and its pretensions; yet he also sought to dismantle it as the archetypal modern city, as the single place in which all human history was rehearsed. It had to be both nowhere and everywhere, absence and presence. Somehow, he had to find the language which would register both aspects of the city. He had to scorn it for its peripherality and praise it for its centrality. Between these two possibilities, his strange language vacillates and develops (Deane 42).

Framed and enclosed by the “dual subjection” of Conmeeism and the viceregal

cavalcade (Williams 153), “Wandering Rocks” is no less a political chapter than “Aeolus.”<sup>3)</sup> Its mimetic content apart, one should note that the stylistic scenario in “Wandering Rocks” is decisively one significant means by which Joyce conveys his attitude toward Irish political and social institutions awaiting Ireland’s deliverance from colonization. The mutually conflicting textual impulses as seen in “Wandering Rocks” testify to the hopelessly entangling complexity of such “semicoloniality” (Attridge and Howes 1) which constituted the complicated situation of Ireland during the time *Ulysses* was written.<sup>4)</sup> Attridge and Howes have observed correctly that “Joyce’s handling of political matters is always mediated by his strong interest in, and immense skill with, language: the two domains are, finally, inseparable in his work” (3). Their magisterial analysis that Joyce uses “linguistic forms to stage political issues with an openness to manifold outcomes that is impossible in the purely pragmatic sphere” (3) can be brilliantly applied to the entangling stylistic diversity and performances in “Wandering Rocks.” The “staging” of stylistic fluidity and fixity at loggerheads with each other in the episode has proved to be evoking an “openness” which is most useful and valuable in the political matter of Ireland the island as well as the nation-to-be. It is by way of textual performativity that impossible spheres like politics can be imagined and participated.

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3) The most overtly political critique in “Aeolus” can be found in Stephen’s “Parable of the Plums” which presents an Irish subaltern story of two Irish maidens reveling against the military, male gaze of the statue of Lord Nelson who is irreverently nicknamed the “onehanded adulterer” in Stephen’s narrative.

4) Derek Attridge and Marjorie Howes in their introduction argue for the currency of this coined jargon: in using an example from *Finnegans Wake*, the editors begin by pointing to Joyce’s “strategy of evoking and simultaneously complicating oppositions” (2) and such complexity justifies Joyce’s writings being called “semicolonial”—“in their dealings with questions of nationalism and imperialism they evince a complex and ambivalent set of attitudes, not reducible to a simple anticolonialism but very far from expressing approval of the colonial organizations and methods under which Ireland had suffered during a long history of oppression, and continued to suffer during his lifetime” (3).



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**Abstract**

## Wandering vs. Monumental Textual Effects in “Wandering Rocks”

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Dublin City is strewn with as numerous (political) statues and monuments as possible, with the intended aim of restoring, witnessing to, and ultimately, commemorating presence of history. The “love of detail” and the “encyclopedic” quality for which *Ulysses* is much known paradoxically highlight Joyce’s disclaimer of Dublin’s, or for that matter, Ireland’s “placedness.” The act of monumentalization is, in effect, highlighted and simultaneously problematized in Joyce’s novel.

Known for breaking a continuous narrative into 19 segments, “Wandering Rocks” features several more meaning-diffusive devices, such as the omnipresent discontinuous intrusive passages, the persistent indefinite articles, the formulaic labeling of the characters, and the intra-textually echoing style—all constituting a centrifugal force to destabilize an ultimate telos. These features form the textual “wandering rocks,” impeding the logical flow and mimetic impulse of the plot. However, one can argue that while overtly diffusing the one single centralizing perspective into 19 and more (on account of intrusions) local and fragmented ones, its narrative methods in the meantime reinscribe a textual holism and restore a monumental effect which the episode’s predominantly wandering style galvanizes inadvertently. Hereupon hinges the textual politics of “Wandering Rocks.”

■ **Key words** : centripetal style, centrifugal style, wandering textual effect, monumental textual effect, textual politics, “Wandering Rocks”  
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